

WASHINGTON, DC-Congressman Earl Blumenauer issued the following statement in response to the President's address to Congress this evening. He will be available for further comment in his Washington, DC office on Wednesday morning, 202-225-4811.

"The President's speech tonight reflected missed opportunities and misplaced priorities.

He has faced challenging times during his two years in office, but it's time to move beyond platitudes and promises.

"Economically, our region -- and almost every state and local government in the nation -- is in dire straights. Families are struggling to find work and many Americans do not have adequate health care. Yet, under the President's economic proposals, the people who need help the most are short-changed in favor of those who need help the least.

"The President also failed to rationalize his wildly different approaches to threats in Iraq and North Korea. For Iraq, a country far weaker than it was twelve years ago, where inspectors are on the ground right now, the President is moving towards a showdown at the United Nations and a potential unilateral pre-emptive war. For North Korea, a country with nuclear weapons capabilities, which has kicked out UN inspectors, the President advocates a peaceful resolution through diplomacy. The American people need a better explanation and a focus on the most critical threats to their security. The number one threat to America is terrorism. We need to focus on this battle to ensure the safety of the American people. Sadly, we are no safer today than we were at the last State of the Union Address, one year ago.

"On the environment, the President again rolled out gentle-sounding proposals which delay or eliminate basic protections and call for future action or voluntary initiatives. In the meantime, this Administration continues its daily assaults on the environment through rollbacks of our environmental protection laws and regulations.

Americans deserve better. I stand ready to work with the President to enact meaningful legislation to immediately provide urgently needed jobs, increase our security at home and protect the environment."